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Letter to the Editor-I: Supply and Demand of IS Faculty: The 2005-2006 Job Market Update

Mark N. Frolick

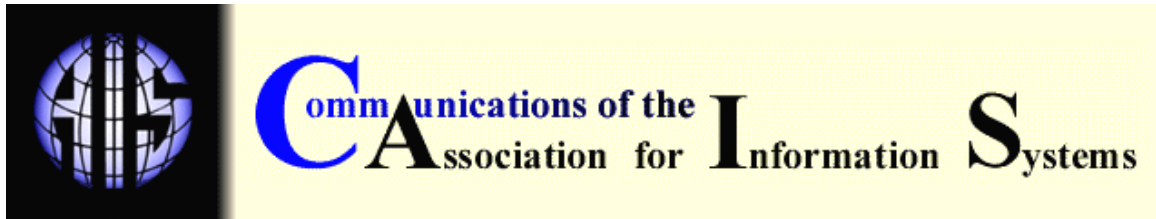
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR-I SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF IS FACULTY: THE 2005-2006 JOB MARKET UPDATE

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ABSTRACT

This letter updates CAIS Volume 15 Article 37 which reported on the demand and supply of IS professors for the period 1992-2004

Keywords: management information systems faculty, supply and demand, IS faculty.

In CAIS Volume 15, Article 37 published in May 2005, Lei Da Chen, Brian Jantz and I presented a longitudinal study of the placement of information systems (IS) faculty [Frolick, et al, 2005]. That study looked at the supply and demand of IS professors between 1992 and 2004. The data used for that study was collected from the AIS and ICIS placement services. This letter updates that study through the end of 2005.

The last decade saw a shift in the IS job market from a time in which jobs were plentiful to a situation where many new Ph.D.'s faced what can kindly be called a challenging job search. For example, in 2000 5.5 positions were available for every job applicant. This abundance is certainly not the case in 2005. In fact, the demand for IS faculty declined even more since our study was published in May 2005.

Table 1 shows the change in the IS job climate from 2004 to 2005,.

IS Faculty Job Market Changes from 2004 to 2005

	2004	2005
Number of applicants	233	234
Number of positions	181	131
Position-applicant ratio	0.78	0.56
Applicant-position ratio	1.29	1.79

The position-applicant ratio represents the average number of positions for each applicant in a given year And the applicant-position ratio shows the number of people vying for each available job. Neither way of looking at the data is encouraging.

An important observation that we made in our original study was that the imbalance of supply and demand of IS faculty during the last decade was largely attributed to the fluctuation in the demand for faculty (number of positions) rather than the supply of faculty (number of applications). The supply of faculty remained relatively stable over the last decade and is essentially unchanged from 2004 to 2005.

The position-applicant ratio from our study for the year 2004 was .78. The ratio for 2005 was even worse at .56. While the data reflects a horrible situation if you are a new Ph.D. looking for a job, you need only to look at history for other examples of similar situations. In 1992, for example, 162 IS job applicants were competing for only 73 IS jobs posted; a position-applicant ratio of .45.

The data are indicative of the actual situation. Some schools recruit informally and some people look for jobs without listing their vita in the AIS/ICIS placement database. The reasons why some people do not list themselves in the placement database include:

1. Looking to move to a better school.
2. Trying to find a new position that pays more.
3. Looking for an appointment a school that is located in a more appealing geographic region (e.g., because of their family or the climate)

To follow up on our previous study, I spoke with the recruiters from many different universities who are recruiting at both the 2005 AMCIS conference in Omaha, NE and the 2005 ICIS conference in Las Vegas, NV. The qualitative comment that kept surfacing was that recruiting is tracking IS class sizes. Nationally, IS enrollments are down anywhere from 15% to 75%. The most common reason mentioned for the downturn in enrollments were that students perceived that the IS job market was no longer vibrant due to outsourcing, the dotcom bubble, and the economic slowdown of the last several years. Student perception of the IS job market, however, lags the most recent projections by the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [2004]. BLS projects that of the ten industries with the fastest wage and salary employment growth from 2002-2012, four of the industries (software publishing, technical consulting, computer systems design, and internet and information services) are IS related. In addition, they project that four of the ten fastest growing occupations over the same time period will be IS related (network/data communications analysts, computer software engineer-applications, computer software engineer-systems software, medical information technicians)

The data in our previous study demonstrated the cyclical nature of IS faculty openings. I expect that as students become aware that the future demand for IS professionals is on the rise, we will once again see IS class sizes increase. If that happens, the result will most certainly be an increased demand for IS faculty. Everything is cyclical.

Editor's Note: This letter was received on December 8, 2005 and was published on December 10 2005.

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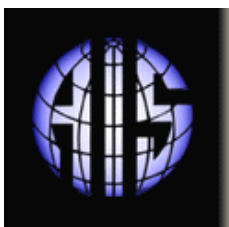
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark N. Frolick is the Western & Southern Financial Chair of Information Systems at Xavier University. His interests include business intelligence, data warehousing, executive information systems, e-business, cycle time reduction, systems analysis and design and the diffusion of information technology in organizations. Dr. Frolick has authored over 90 articles. His research has appeared in prestigious journal such as *MIS Quarterly*, *Decision Sciences*, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *Decision Support Systems*, and *Information & Management*. Dr. Frolick's background includes over 20 years of experience in the information systems field and work as an independent consultant for numerous Fortune 500 companies. He also serves as a consulting editor for several publishers.

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